S A I N T L O U I S B I R D C L U B B U L L E T I N

Official Organ of the Saint Louis Bird Club
for the Promotion of
Bird Enjoyment, Bird Study and Bird Conservation

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BIRD MIGRATION

With the beginning of November, bird migration for this region is about over until Spring. The subject of "Bird Migration" is very large, and most of our members are well acquainted with its general principals. I have decided to take only a subdivision of the general title, namely that group of (almost non-migratory birds) which may yet come to us from the North. I have selected a list of nineteen species as possibilities for your field note book this winter, using as my guarantee Mr. Widmann's catalogue. These northern visitors come to us as the northern food supply diminished and thus their arrival dates are irregular, depending on other factors besides the weather or calendar. One almost universal trait may be found in this group of visitors from the wild, inhospitable North, that is most of them know little fear of man, and so allow easy identification.

As early as the first week of November the following members of the Sparrow family may be possibilities: The Evening Grosbeak, that essentially northwestern wanderer, awaits some lucky St. Louisian, -- for him to recognize it by its fearlessness. Its summer home may have been in the Canadian Rockies, in its most inaccessible part. The Pine Grosbeak, also a fearless bird is described by Job: "Some cold bright winter morning, when first we step out into the frost, we hear a pleasing mellow whistle, and see several birds, resembling Robins, glide up into the apple tree, or the clump of spruces in the front yard. Investigation reveals that there are about a dozen of them, moving about in rather a sedate and deliberate manner .... there is a peculiar charm about these birds from the Northern wilds... They are often accompanied by the fiercer Goshawks and the Northern Shrike. They eat, in addition to pine-cone seeds, the seeds of the maple".

The White-winged Crossbill, very irregular, yet a possibility. More probable is the occurrence of the Redpoll. Burdich: "Redpolls are very unsuspicious, and may be approached closely, or if one should stand still where they are feeding they will come quite close".

As a final possibility in this group, there is the famous Snow Bunting, commonly called the Snowflake. "Only in depth of winter do they drift on down into the northern United States to haunt the snow-swept hillsides of the farm... They are much whiter than the other Sparrows."--Nichols. Dr. Elliot Coues found them at Fort Randall on the Missouri River, some distance above Yankton (however). The Snowflakes "reached Fort Randall November 15th, after a severe cold snap with a light snow-fall, and as I write (January), great numbers are swirling over the ground around and in the fort. They keep pretty closely in flocks...fly compactly and whirl all together...they present a pretty sight".

A famous songster, but somewhat more southerly in its winter range, is the Lapland Longspur. It will be met in the open land and wind-swept swamp, or water shore. Fuertes: "It sings the most beautiful song north of Bobolink Land". Nelson: "The males... scatter here and there, at frequent intervals, mount slowly on tremulous wings, pause a moment, and then with wings uppointed, Veshaped, float gently back to their perches, uttering as they sing their liquid notes, which fall in tinkling succession on the ear...an exquisite, slightly jingling melody... resembling the song of the Bobolink".

We are all aware of the infrequent visits paid us by the Bohemian Waxwing. They are another very tame bird to observe, and are particularly to be looked for in the upper Mississippi Valley. The writer met them commonly in Wisconsin; but for Missouri, that is in the vicinity of St. Louis, I believe Mr. Widmann is the only one who has found them.

We have said before that the Northern Shrike often accompanies a flight of Grosbeaks southward. They are found here more commonly, however, than the Grosbeaks. They are about one inch longer than our Migrant Shrike, and have the same method of flight. It is a peculiar heavy flight...rapid flapping... gains perch by sudden upward glide. Description from Pearson.

Turning now to some of the larger winter visitors we see that the Snowy Owl is very likely around the middle of November, or later if the season is late. "The fine, strong, and picturesque Snowy Owl comes to us as a migrant from the northland, where it breeds, and where the long days in summer make its habits chiefly diurnal. This fact has been discovered far too late by many a Crow engaged with his brethren in the pleasing diversion of mobbing the big white specter, sitting on a limb motionless, and presumably blind, because obviously an Owl. For, let one of the black tormentors come near enough;and the ghost suddenly launches out on strong, silent wings, the great talons strike and close, and there is a Crow who would have been wiser but for the circumstance that he is very dead."--Gladden.

Lest we overlook the little Saw-whet Owl, Pearson: "If sound sleeping be a sign of a clear conscience, the Saw-whet Owl must have very few sins on its mind, for so deep is its slumber, huddled up in a spruce thicket, or some other dense foliage, that frequently even clumsy man captures it alive". It is non-migratory, but wanders for food.

The Pigeon Hawk, that lover of the shore where Plover and Sandpiper abound, may be expected, but more surely may we look for the Goshawk, already mentioned. "The most symmetrical and clean-cut of all its family, not excepting even the Peregrine Falcon."--Brasher.

Most any dull winter evening one should not be surprised to meet the American Rough-legged Hawk. Brasher: "Breeds in Alaska... feeds in open meadows or country covered with scrub and brush... is nearest to nocturnal in habits of all our Hawks. Its plumage is soft and fluffy, its flight noiseless, and, when observed in the twilight, sweeping quickly over the open spaces where field mice abound, it is easily mistaken for an Owl. When mice are abundant one or two Rough-legs will hunt for weeks in the vicinity, effectually controlling these pests.... While watching for rabbits, on moonlit nights, I have more than once been startled by the sudden appearance of a dark form sweeping noiselessly down on a luckless mouse, playing on the snow crust. A swift dash.- a tiny

squeak- then the quick disappearance of both captor and victim into the shadows".

Among the water-fowl there is the Scoter, but usually in the immature plumage. It is not good for food, and so not hunted as such. Forbush: "A cultured Boston lady assures me that when she attempted to cook one, it drove everybody out of the house, and that she had to throw away the kettle that it was cooked in". Another possibility is the Harlequin Duck. "Harlequin, well named! Fantastically decorated, but still a thing of beauty. Delightful in color, elegant in form, graceful in carriage, rightly are its little companies called the "Lords and Ladies" of the waters". The Old Squaw is later and so would not be expected before the middle of November. It is also of no value as food. It was named because of its ceaseless chattering. Two further possibilities are the beautiful Golden-eyes. They are often called whistlers because of their rapid flight, and they are fine sights while on the wing. The Barrow's Golden-eye is much less commn here than the American. Audubon found them along the Ohio River, incidentally feeding on crawfish. The females and immature of both species are practically indistinguishable in the field.

TITLE FOR NEXT MONTH

The title of next month's project is, "Economic Studies of Birds". As usual members may send in material relative to this subject to the chairman, before the first of the month. He will deliver it to the compiler of the article. Economic studies that have been made by local talent upon local birds are preferred.

TREE SWALLOW MIGRATION

Immense numbers of Tree Swallows were observed near the village of Creve Coeur, St. Louis County, on October 4th by Dr. M. L. Klinefelter, a member of the St. Louis Bird Club. The air was filled with birds flying in all directions and no limit to the vast assemblage could be seen. Other birds were attacked, pursued and driven away by the Swallows. At times large numbers alighted upon the roof of a barn. The flight continued throughout the entire day.-- Submitted by Dr. Terry for Dr. Klinefelter.

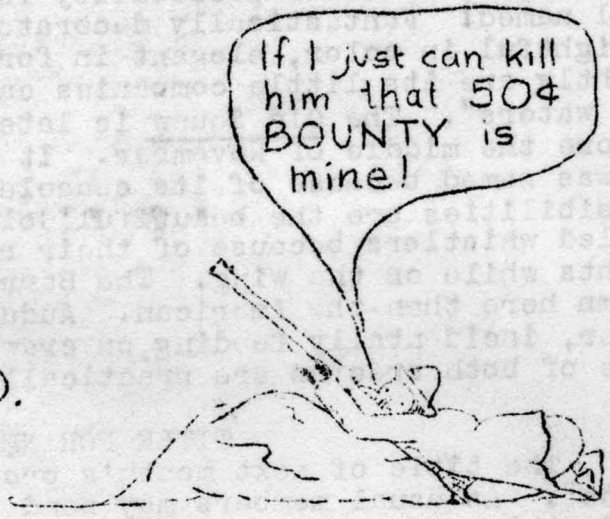
THE DOMESTIC CAT

The Audubon Association is seeking means of combatting the Cat Menace in the United States. The cat is a more serious menace than many suppose as it does its hunting at night or early morning unobserved. In addition to its harm to bird life it is a disease carrier and thus a menace to human life. The proposed activities have reference tothe vagrant "alley" cat.

New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and California have taken steps to control the vagrant cat, and several towns now have adopted a license ordinance. However, the greatest difficulty is the fact that people at large are not interested in adopting the licensing method, so the various states are asked to try different means of control, of which finally one may be adopted.

A LOCAL BIRD MUSEUM

In connection with its newly organized Museum, the Webster Groves Group has begun a section devoted to birds. The Museum is located in the Lodge at Rankin. The Bird Group is handled



Potting our NATIONAL BIRD.

by means of pictures rather than the usual way, in order to preserve our bird life to that extent. The other usual features are there, however. Interested members are credited on their observation rather than on the collected body. They must submit the name of the bird in writing, the locality, the date, and the observer's name. This will accompany the picture which will then be placed in the gallery, for permanent record.

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP A SUCCESS

At the call of the president a large group of the St. Louis Bird Club's members traveled to Creve Coeur Lake, October 14, to share the meeting of the month. It was a combining of field work and discussion, on a beautiful day, for weather conditions were perfect. In the group was Mr. Randolph of the Post Dispatch whose article in the following Sunday's edition was a delightfully written review of the field meeting. The observations reported are to be found in Dr. Hetler's department, this issue, and stand as an invitation to us to continue making frequent field trips together.

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FIELD OBSERVATIONS

(Address communications relative to this department to Dr. D. M. Hetler, 424 E. Big Bend Blvd., Webster Groves, Mo.)

Miss Ernst, N. K. Barger and Tom Kirksey saw over 90 species on a trip to Mattoon, Illinois, on September 30-October 1. The following were reported as the most interesting:

Pied-billed grebe,
Caspian Tern,
Double-crested Cormorant,
Mallard Black Duck,
Blue-winged Teal,
Shoveler,
Lesser Scaup Duck,
American Bittern,
Least Bittern,
Great Blue Heron,
Eastern Green Heron,
Black-crowned Night Heron,
King Rail,
Sora,
Coot,
Wilson's Snipe,
Dowitcher,
Baird's Sandpiper,
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Lesser Yellow Legs,
Solitary Sandpiper,
Least Sandpiper?
Spotted Sandpiper,
Turkey Vulture,
Duck Hawk?
Osprey,
Barred Owl (Heard)
Yellow-bellied sapsucker,
Wood Pewee,
European Tree Sparrow (over 100 at Horse Shoe Lake)
Junco,
Barn Swallow,
Rough-winged Swallow
Cedar Waxwing,
Red-eyed Vireo,
Yellow-throated Vireo,
White-eyed Vireo
Black and White Warbler,
Yellow Warbler,
Myrtle Warbler,
Bay-breasted Warbler,
Black-poll Warbler,
Blackburnian Warbler,
Black-throated Green Warbler,
Pine Warbler,
Palm Warbler,
Oven-bird,
Mourning Warbler,
Redstart,
Catbird,
House Wren,
Long-billed Marsh Wren (Heard),
Golden-crowned Kinglet,
Ruby-crowned Kinglet,
Wood Thrush,
Hermit Thrush

Tom Kirlsey reports 3 Pileated Woodpeckers and Parula Warbler at Rankin, Missouri, on October 8. N. K. Barger reports Rose-brested Grosbeak at Concordia Seminary Campus and Chimney Swift in Forest Park, October 8. A. F. and E. A. Satterthwait report that juncos in the garden at 118 Waverly Place, Webster Groves were first observed this autumn on October 21, and the first one banded this season was on Nov. 1. On a field trip over the wooded hills near Allenton, Missouri, on October 29, a Pileated Woodpecker and a Red-tailed Hawk were the most outstanding records.

Creve Coeur Bird walk, Saturday, October 14. Reported by Dr. R. J. Terry (T) and N. R. Barger (B) and their associates.

Double-crested Cormorant (T),
Great Blue Heron (B),
Coot, (B)
Solitary Sandpiper (B),
Killdeer (B),
Mourning Dove (B),
Marsh Hawk (T),
Sharp-shinned Hawk (?) (T),
Red-tailed Hawk (B),
Duck- Hawk (?) (B),
Belted Kingfisher (T),
Hairy Woodpecker (T),
Downy Woodpecker (T),
Red-headed Woodpecker (B),
Red-bellied Woodpecker (T)
Flicker (T),
Phoebe (B),
Blue Jay (T),
Crow (T),
Red-winged Black-bird (T),
Bronzed Grackle (T),
Gold Finch (T),
White-throated Sparrow (T),
Song Sparrow (T),
Cardinal, (T),
Tree Swallow (?) (B),
Shrike (B),
Myrtle Warbler (T),
Black-throated Green Warbler (B),
Palm Warbler (B),
Mockingbird (T),
Long-billed Marsh Wren (B),
Tufted Titmouse (T),
White-breasted Nuthatch (T),
Black-capped Chickadee (T),
Golden-crowned Kinglet (T),
Bluebird (T),
Robin (T).